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Alfred Maine
June 17 1935

Copy finished Jan. 14, 1937

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The Diary of Mrs. George W. Jordan, Wife of Captain G. W. Jordan
of the Barque Clement on a voyage from New Orleans to St. Petersburg, Russia. Copied
from the original diary which was found in an old sea desk by Judge Harry B. Ayer.

May 30, 1838

We bid goodbye to the city of New Orleans last evening without shedding many tears of regret, at least I did not shed many, for I must say I was glad to get away. The negroes call the city the Devil's Den. I think it is a very appropriate name, or not to speak quite so harsh, I should say it was a den for the refuse of every nation; it is a place where religion and laws are forgotten or are laid aside and where he that can swaer the most, drink the most mint julep, or, in short, he that can sin with the highest hand is the best man. The steamer took us in tow about 9 o'clock last evening, in company with 3 other vessels we arrived at the bilze(?) at ten and at eleven we was safe outside of the Mississippi bar; we come to anchor a ~~short~~ short time, but as it was a pleasant afternoon the canvas was spread to the breeze and we set sail for the city of St. Petersburg. It is a long voyage for me but I hope I shall have no reason to repent of undertaking it.

May 31, 1838

We have had squalls and calm today, rain, thunder, and lightening, plenty of it, caught a barrel of good soft water. I shall have a grand chance to wash out a few things tomorrow, but I must feel smarter than I did this morning. I think I was a little seasick, threw up my breakfast, felt quite miserable, went to bed, took a long nap, felt a great deal better for it, so much so that I ate my breakfast as well as usual. I always believed in naps. Made the mate some plain porridge who is quite unwell, and has been for some days. Fed the chickens, they have got the gapes and sore eyes; the sea does not agree with them, one or two have died already. Cut me out a nightcap, etc. Thus ends the day which was begun so poorly.

June 1, 1838

June 1, 1838

It has been fine and pleasant with light breezes today. I have been quite smart, washed out 9 pieces and was so fortunate as to get them dry, cleaned out my cabin which is something of a job, I assure you. It is about 8 feet long, and 12 wide, one third is occupied by a bedstead, the other two thirds is filled up with cabin furniture, such, for instance, as one table, one chair, one sea-chest, two small trunks, one band-box, one box claret-wine, the ship's main top-sail, and a variety of other small articles. I prepared some syrup made of arrow root for the mate who still remains unwell. George is asleep on a cotton bale in the upper cabin, he has got to stand watch from eight to twelve, takes the mate's watch now he is sick.

June 2, 1838

Commenced with pleasant weather, but ended with rain squalls, got up early enough to make two batches biscuit, one for breakfast and one for tea, been very busy all day sewing on my nightcap and knitting.

June 3, 1838

Pleasant weather and fair winds today. George has been confined to his bed all day quite sick with the ----, the mate seems to be a little better, able to sit on deck. I have had as much as I could do to wait on George, and tired at that.

June 4 to 10, 1838

We have had uncommon pleasant weather the past week with fair winds and well for us that it has been, for George has been very sick through the week, he has been in great pain most of the time, he seems to be a little better today. I do not know how he will get his strength again for we have no dainties on board to nourish the sick. Our fowl are all dead. He thinks if he had a little chicken-broth he could eat it. We had plenty of fish playing round us last week which were very nice but caught only one, there are plenty of LENETOES playing around the stern now but they are too wise to be caught. If we could get one I think I could make him a nice broth. It is a poor place to be sick on board of a vessel at sea, any one suffers for proper medicine when sick and proper nourishment when recovering. I have nursed him as well as I knew how with what I had to do with, and that is the most I have done, mend-

Kelley-3-a

ed a few old duds, set up a cotton stocking, worked time twice a day. It has been very warm through the week, at 8 this morning the thermometer stood at 80, at 12 eightyfive.

June 11, 1835 (error, probably) should be 1838

Rose quite early and prepared some gruel for George, but was so sleepy or lazy, I don't know which, I was glad to crawl into my bed again and take another nap before breakfast. I should have slept all the forenoon if I had not been called and I wish to mercy they had not called me, for I have felt as stupid as a fool all day. I have not had my regular sleep for 8 or 10 nights past and because I had nothing else to disturb me the rats thought they would have a set down in the pantry last night. But Spot found out their plans and walked in, for a share, he killed no less than seven, he is death on rats. After breakfast noted and worked time then fussed about until 12 o'clock which is our dinner hour. After dinner I cut me out a cape and commenced working it, got it well under way, to use a sea phrase. It has been a delightful day, the Barque has been sailing proudly with a fair wind and strong current. George is a great deal better today, he has been on deck several times. How glad I shall be to have him giving orders again.

June 12, 1838

A fair wind and a fine day. Began reading Fanny Kimbal's Journal, or rather Frances Ann Butler's, she is a curious woman I should judge from her writings, not much refinement about it, I do not know as we can expect much from a theatrical character. Some parts are very good, some witty, and some are very foolish as far as I have read. Worked four patterns on my cape. George advises me to throw it overboard and employ my time more profitably or save my patience for a future day. He is a great deal better today, set on deck several hours.

June 13, 1838

I am sick myself today, or half sick I do not know which. I go to bed, get up, walk up and down deck, knit a little, sew a little, or try to, but all to no purpose. I feel sick and cannot drive it off. I wish for a good drink of cold water and the Lord only knows what I do wish for; to tell the sum and substance I wish myself at home. We have lovely weather, heaven favors us in that respect, we could not wish for better.

Kelley-3 -13

January 11 1936

June 14, 1838

I feel a great deal better today, have been working on my cape or reading Fanny Butters Journal most of the day. She thinks everything of England, her dear home, I do not blame her for praising and extolling her native country, but I think she goes too far when she prefers her shrouds of fog to our sunny skies; after tea walked on deck or stood musing over the rail of the past, present, and to come. At eight went below and played three games of cards with George, then read my Bible and went to bed.

June 15, 1838

A very pleasant day with fair wind, been very busy working on my cape every moment of time and now am going to bed with the eyes and head ache to pay for it.

June 16th, 1838

I thought I would have a variety today as I worked on my cape so steady yesterday; made some hop beer, kneaded up some dough-nuts, soused some pigs' feet, by the way we killed a pig yesterday which was very nice, made some short biscuit for tea, mended two pairs of drawers besides, take it all together I have had quite a day's work. Very pleasant. Spoke Ship Triumph from London, bound to Philadelphia, saw two women on board, so I am not the only female off this wide waste of waters.

June 17th, 1838

Very pleasant in the forenoon, in the afternoon had thick, foggy weather. Sundays are long days at sea, or at least they seem so to me, I often wish I was where I could spend them more profitably, but it is useless to wish.

June 18, 1838

Thick weather and rain squalls, made some pies and tarts, mended some old garments. At four o'clock a fresh breeze sprung from the northeast, they took in the top-gallant sails and tacked ship, at six reefed top-sails. I have done nothing since four but stow away all my little things and prepare for a blow.

June 19, 1838

Arose at eight, went in the upper cabin and took my breakfast but was glad to get below again it was so wet and rainy, the storm increasing every moment. George brought my dinner down to me, a mug of coffee and some biscuit and butter. At one the vessel was hove to, I wrapped my cloak round me and went into the upper cabin to see them

Kelley-4

furl her sails and put her head to the wind.

June 20, 1838

This morning it began to moderate very slowly and has been moderating all day by degrees, but the seas was very high and there is a considerable of a breeze on the waters now. She is still dipping her lee bow under, the gale does us no injury but the seas forced in a small piece of her bullwarks; the seas would occasionally strike the stern and force the water under the dead light and into the sky-light. I had a wet night-cap more than once.

June 21, 1838

Fine weather again today. I have hemmed two sheets, but it was quite an exertion to work, I feel sore and stiff; this rough weather tires one out more than work and makes one feel a great deal worse.

June 22, 1838

We have got our old fair wind back again and the Barque is going off in high glee at the rate of seven knots an hour. I still feel very sore and my head is quite dizzy, we never had a storm that affected me so much before. I have been trying to work all day but have not accomplished much, washed out a few things and worked a few patterns on my cape, made some dough-nuts for tea.

June 23, 1838

Sunny mornings are often succeeded by cloudy evenings is an old saying and we have experienced the truth of it today for the old Barque has been flying over the waves under a fair sky, before a fresh breeze at the rate of eight knots an hour until five o'clock when the clouds began to gather blackness, the wind shifted round to the northeast and began her old tune by degrees; the cross seas made the Barque dance on tiptoes a short time but she soon got tired of that and went to diving. A northeaster has a mournful sound at home, but here under these black skies and still blacker waters, it sounds DISMAL, DISMAL. I have been working on my cape most of the day and listening to George read some distressing shipwrecks from the Mariner's Chronicle. Oh dear! I hope it will never be my lot to be shipwrecked. It is too bad, I declare, that I should have to go to bed with such a long face after I have been so happy all day, but here I am to bed with the expectation of being rolled, tumbled and pitched from one post of my bed to the other. Goodnight.

June 24, 1838

As good luck will have it I was happily disappointed last night, I had a very comfortable night of it; the wind freshened until about ten, then died away to a calm. This morning instead of finding it blowing and raining when I came on deck as I expected to last night, was lovely and bright blue sky, blue waters, and a gentle breeze, how charming. I have been sleeping and reading today by turns, it is getting quite cool again, the thermometer stands at sixty. The sun sets at seven o'clock and 29 minutes.

June 25, 1838

A waveless sea and cloudless sky, not a ripple on the face of the deep, nothing to move its waters but its own breathing or swelling, it is pleasant to look upon this calmness, but not pleasant to think it will remain so any length of time; who would ever think old ocean would ever sleep? The water was full of sun galls, the second mate went down the side of the ship on a rope and dipped one up in a basket, they are nothing but a jelly, but have life to expand and draw themselves up when they please; the dog came along and smelled at it and vomited immediately. I have done nothing but bind two charts although it has been such delightful weather to work.

June 26, 1838

A grand breeze today. We have been going at the rate of 8 knots an hour. I like this. Two sail in sight. The prospect now is that we shall have this breeze all night and I am so selfish I should not care if it did not shift until we get to Elsinour (?)

June 27, 1838

An 8 knot breeze all day but very thick and foggy with some rain. G.. says this is real English weather. I am sick already if I have got to breathe nothing but fog for 3 months to come. In England they dread a westerly breeze as much as we Americans do an easterly. I was ignorant of the fact before; been very busy working on my cape.

June 28, 1838

Thick and foggy, fair wind and plenty of it. I think so but am afraid we shall have more of it before morning, the sun set behind a map of thick clouds. I have been working on my cape, reading, or knitting through the day.

June 29, 1838

The sun is out bright this morning, the clouds have all settled round the horizon

just to tell us they have not used themselves up. It is still blowing quite fresh, rough weather for this season of the year; I expected we should have fine pleasant weather all the passage, but instead of that it is windy, wet, and cold. The seas have been running so high and the vessel lying over so much, I have done very little of the work kind today. After tea went out and set on deck with George, had just got busy talking when over came a sea and gave us a good ducking. A French barge crossed our bows this afternoon.

June 30, 1838

Cloudy and cold, sailing with square yards and light breezes, been mending old stockings the whole day, tired and most dreadful stupid, do you wonder at it? Saw a ship under our lee.

July 1, 1838

Thick and foggy again today, we go along so-so, been reading most of the time or listening to hear George read more of his accounts of shipwrecks. I shall be glad when he gets through with it.

July 2, 1838

The weather has been more agreeable today, not quite so foggy, moderate breezes, long days about these times; the sun sets tonight 30 minutes after eight and rises about four, just make out to get one short nap before daylight. The thermometer stands at fifty-six. Made one pillowcase and worked on my cape. The cook drowned our poor sick cat today. I asked him if he was not afraid she would haunt him tonight. He thought, he said, she would think he done her a great kindness for she was out of the dog's way and at peace with all nations.

July 3, 1838

Head winds strong and cold. I have been sitting in the upper cabin on a cotton bale all day, wrapped in a blanket and cloak, squaw fashion, listening to George read more shipwreck accounts. He finished them today and glad am I for they distress me exceedingly. I am completely benumbed with the cold, I have no desire to be more than four degrees farther north. Made one pillow case and knit quite a piece on my stocking.

July 4, 1838

Kelley-7

July 4, 1838

Fourth of July and here I am out in the great western ocean. I should really to know where you all are at home today or where you are going. I suppose to take a ride on the beach or some other pleasant excursion, but if I was at home I should rather take a walk in the woods for I have got almost enough of the sea and the sound of many waters has not that charm upon me it once had. I think I should prefer to hear the winds rustling through the leaves and the sweet music of birds than to hear the winds mournful sound sweeping over the waters. Quite pleasant today with head winds, been doing a few chores such as cleaning out my cabin, looking over my clothes to see if the damp sea air had spotted them etc.

July 5, 1838

Contrary winds, forenoon pleasant, afternoon foggy, working on my cape.

July 6, 1838

Dead ahead again today, the sun peeps out upon us occasionally through clouds of fog just to let us know he walks in his accustomed path. How much I wish we could have a fair wind; it is no enviable situation to be in mid-ocean, tossed about by contrary winds. Began to scallop my cape, made some doughnuts; the cypk made some yesterday but I guess he had the eating of them himself for no teeth but a negro's would ever chew them fine enough to swallow.

July 7, 1838

All sorts of winds, first on one side and then the other, fair and cloudy, as the occasion suits. Finished my cape and now I have got the collar to work; by the time that is done I think I shall clap my hands and say I will not undertake another such job at sea if I have the chance, knit and read some.

July 8, 1838

We have been loitering on our way for the last five days, have had very few pleasant hours in the time which makes it seem long. I should not care about living in these latitudes if they were always so foggy and cloudy as they have been lately. It has been pouring with rain ~~lately~~ all day. I have done nothing but lie in bed reading.

July 7, 1838

Kelley-8

July 7, 1838

Good news, a fair wind once more, the old barque has sailed five degrees the last twenty-four hours, making up for lost time, only 30 miles to a degree of longitude in these latitudes. Saw a brig standing to the eastward. Knit a finger's length on my cotton stocking.

July 10, 1838

It has been very pleasant today and good breeze besides, it is quite cheering to have pleasant weather and fair winds again. I have cut me out a pair of staves and basted them, knit heel to my stocking, made some biscuit for tea, scolded to George for not scolding to the cook he is so dirty. I think I shall have to eat my peck of dirt if I have not already. Any one that goes to sea ought to have a stomach as strong as a horse. I have put some clothes in soak calculating to wash on the morrow if it is as pleasant as it has been today, and now am going to bed but I will not say to sleep but dose. So much daylight disturbs my slumbers, it is half past eight now and no thoughts of being dark.

July 11, 1838

Cloudy with light breezes in the forenoon, in the afternoon cloudy and calm, the sun did not make its appearance for the day. Saw several kinds of birds, we are not far from land. Began the collar to my cape, washed out ten or a dozen pieces but could not get them dry, obliged to put them in soak, suppose they will all mildew before there comes a sunny day, nothing but a Scotch mist now to expect.

July 12, 1838

Cloudy, the wind not quite so fair as we should like. I had the pleasure of discovering two sail before any of the ship's company, and, of course, had the promise of a bottle of grog. I have got good news to write, we made land about six this afternoon, supposed it to be the island of St. Kilda, the north west coast of Scotland, been working on my collar and knitting.

July 13, 1838

Cloudy with fresh breezes, have not had an observation these two days good for anything, made the land this forenoon again, about eleven o'clock, supposed it to be the islands of Bara and Rona. Spoke ship *Hannover* of Providence bound from Charleston, S.C.

Kelley-9

to St. Petersburg, we shall be likely to have company if we do not outsail her. I have worked some on my cape and knit some.

July 14, 1838

Quite pleasant today, the sun has made out to break through the fog it has so long been shrouded in, the ship we spoke yesterday is about ten miles stern of us, knitting, made some doughnuts to last over Sunday.

July 15, 1838

Thick weather with a moderate breeze, if it was fair we would have another view of the islands which I should like much, the lights were seen on the islands last night S (Or T) Amborough head light on the Shetlands and Start light on the Orkneys. I was wrapped up too comfortable in bed to trouble myself about them as long as we were safe. We spoke Barque Highlander of Boston, from Newcastle, England, bound to Boston, he wanted to know if we had seen the land and how it bore, he said he had been out four or five days but it had been so thick he had seen nothing. We asked him to report the Barque Clement when she got in, etc, seen several sail today besides. The sun sets clear tonight for a wonder, it is half past eight and he is just sinking behind the blue waters, this is one of the few times I have seen the sun go down this side of the Grand Banks, it has been a rare sight this voyage.

July 16, 1838

One pleasant sunny day and as much wind as the ship can stagger under with all sail set, seen sail going in every direction from a ship down to a sloop, been knitting, finished one stocking and set up another and made a puddingbag. Now when I want to eat pudding I shall cook it in my own bag. Been setting in the cook's galley part of the day, I do not know whether the cook or the cooking stove enticeth me there.

July 17, 1838

A fine day and a smart breeze, we have been going at the rate of seven, eight, and nine knots an hour, what a glorious run across the North Sea. We made the high land of RODSNOUT(?) about four in the P.M. and before ten we doubled Scaw point. The lighthouse on Scaw-point is sixty-seven feet high, at twelve made the light on Trindelen rock, this rock lies upon the extremity of the reef that runs from Lesson Island. Sails of every description going in all directions. There were five sail doubling Scaw point when we were.

Kelley-10

July 18, 1838

Anholt Island was all in sight this morning when I came on deck which was earlier than usual as I wanted to take a squint at land. The lighthouse on Anholt Island is elevated 112 feet above the surface of the water, it shows two lights one above the other. The Island looks naked. At eight made Waderve (?) Island, soon after made Koll point. It has a lighthouse on it. While doubling Koll point trees and shrubery began to make their appearance and as we neared Elsinour (?) the prospect grew more beautiful, along the ~~shores~~ shores on level spots would be seen little villages, Danish on one side and Swedish on the other. Upon the highlands some distance back it had the appearance of thick forests.

At four o'clock we dropped anchor in Elsinew roads in front of the city and and right abreast of Cronenburg castle. We had not been at anchor many minutes before the water-man came along side to see if the Captain would be taken on shore, but they said they must carry the ship's papers first and then they would come and take him, but George was up to snuff and chose to go in his own boat, when he came back the merchant sent me by him a bottle of cream, some strawberries and a nosegay large enough to set in a water pail. I felt very thankful for them and shall remember him sometime. He also brought two pilots with him, one for the Baltic and one to pilot us over the Drago-grounds, likewise Drago~~g~~~~id~~~~h~~~~u~~~~i~~~~s~~~~e~~ some fresh fish, some fresh meat, potatoes and some nice red cherries. We shall feast now for a few days. They are heaving up the anchor to be on the way again.

July 19, 1838

I felt some disappointed this morning for I calculated last night to have a view of Copenhagen, but they passed it before I was up. I asked G. to call me but he thought it was too cold and damp and too early, never mind I will try and take a look when I go back. We have passed three of the Baltic islands, Speclecliff, Bornholm, and Ethholm. The last island is very small, there is a castle on it and troops are kept there and the governor of Bornholm Island lives there. I made a nice cherry pudding for dinner, I forgot to mention George brought some eggs among his other eatables yesterday. It is quite pleasant and plenty of wind. I have been working on my staves and viewing the islands.

July 20, 1838

Not quite wind enough today, rather moderate, we made the Island of Gotland about one

Kelley-II

O'clock this afternoon. This island is ~~for~~ eighty miles long and thirty broad, it has forty churches on it, all protestants. I have been over in the Island working on my (staves) stages and knitting. We passed a Swedish vessel that had a woman on board.

July 22, 1838 (21)

Calm all day, quite warm. The Island of Gothland is in sight. Nothing wonderful to relate only that G. counted 48 sail that were waiting for a breeze. Made a pudding for dinner, made some pancakes for tea and fryed them myself. Finished my staves, bound one chart, give my cabin a thorough brush-out.

July 22, 1838

A good smart breeze but a head one for us, between twelve and one we had a wind squall and a rain squall. We have got all sorts of a Pilot, when he gets out sight of land he is lost, the most he does is smoke his long pipe. How much I wish myself at home Sundays, they are long lonely days on board of a ship.

July 23, 1838

No wind to speak of and what there is is against us, seen no land today, of course our pilot can sleep and smoke as much as he please. I have been working on my collar and knitting, made some doughnuts for supper.

July 24, 1838

Dagerot lighthouse (538 high) is in sight this morning so it seems we have progressed a little through the night. We have got a fair wind today, I hope it will carry us to Elsinore before it changes for I begin to feel wearied our voyage has been so long. I ache to step my feet on land once more. I have been knitting the whole day, I want to get as much of my yarn as possible knit up before we get in for fear they will take it themselves if I have too much on hand. Mr. Morse, the second mate, made me a very pretty cricket today. Odensholm Island is in sight, they have just lit up the lighthouse, it is 111 feet high.

July 25, 1838

Ricksor light is in sight,

All's right, ninety nine feet in height.

We passed three lights last night, at one time all three could be seen, Pachetrot Light, Sarep point light, and the light on Norgon Island, one island on the Finland side this morning was seen. We passed Ekholm Island about nine, at twelve made the Island

Kelley-I2

of Gothland, it is about-- miles long and -- miles wide. There are about 500 inhabitants on it, the Lord only knows how they live in the winter, Saw Rothscar, Wiggins, and gret and little Thyer's Island, the first mentioned has a lighthouse on it. Been washing today getting things ready to go into port, am half tired to death.

July 26, 1838

I really believe I have got some kind of rumatism in my wrists, I could not sleep they ached so bad. Made Sommer's light last night about twelve. I was on deck last night at two o'clock and it was all daylight. Then Sesker Island was to be seen and the light shone dim. It is now ten o'clock and the shipping at Cronstadt is all in sight, at eleven the officers from the guard ship boarded us to see is all was right before we proceeded any farther. At twelve we came to anchor and then another regiment of officers came on board to put on seals before we could haul inside the mole, nothing to be seen but ships of war, and officers and soldiers on the pier head and plenty of cannon. It looks altogether too warlike for me.

July 27th.

We are safe inside the mole and made fast but she was very loth to get settled in any place, we have been one whole day pulling and hauling about, first this way and then that to keep clear of other vessels that were coming in and going out at the same time. We received no injury but I wonder at it. I was on tiptoe several times for it seemed as though we should back into somebody or they should into us, but thanks be, we are safe, moored among a forest of sail. I would not have minded it if George had been on board, but he was entering his vessel, etc and could not be there, besides he did not want the bother of it I guess and I do not much blame him. For you are obliged to be ordered by an officer on the pier head and you are to pull back or forward just to please him and he could not talk English any better than we can talk Russian, so you may well imagine what a bother they had.

I was in hopes to go up to Petersburg tonight but my trunk has to be searched again by the custom house officers before it can go up. O mercy, what a fuss! And they are only in their office regular hours, if anybody was a dying they would have to wait their motions. My trunk has been thoroughly searched once, I should think that would be enough, but it is no use to fret. However I went ^S shore in Cron-

Kelley-13

stadt and took a walk which has been very pleasant. We went out to the Admiral's garden which was very pretty indeed, and then we went into the Navyyard and see them building and repairing ships of war and see them manoeuvring soldiers in every direction, came on ship board and took a cold supper for the victuals have to be cooked on shore, and so this day

July 28

My trunk has been through all the ceremonies, weighed, sealed and delivered. We went on board the steamboat at nine o'clock and arrived at the city of Petersburg at twelve o'clock, just lunch time. You may be assured I was glad to get something in shape of victuals for I was half starved. We took up our abode at Mrs.*** the only American house here. She has a great many boarders at present so we have got nothing but a small bed room. I felt tired out in the steamboat that I have not been out to walk to see the wonders--

July 29-- no more. The next few pages were torn out.